



Kansas Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh

# Canvassing Kansas

An update on election news in Kansas

September 1997

## First NVRA report issued to Congress

The Federal Election Commission (FEC) has issued its first NVRA report to Congress entitled "The Impact of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 on the Administration of Elections for Federal Office." The Act, known by its acronym NVRA, has been in effect in 43 of the 50 states since January 1, 1995. One of the NVRA's requirements is that the FEC make a biennial report to Congress in June of odd-numbered years on the status of NVRA implementation.

According to the report, nationwide voter registration has

increased 1.84% under the NVRA, amounting to 3.8 million new registrants, which equals the total registration of Massachusetts. Since NVRA, 41 million registration cards have been processed; one-third of the transactions were name and address changes. At the end of 1996, there were 142,995,856 registered voters nationwide, amounting to 72.7% of the total voting age population.

In Kansas, registration has risen from 1,365,847 in 1992 to 1,438,894 in 1996. The latter figure represents 75.8% of the state's voting age population.

The FEC included an analysis of the sources of registrations. Nationwide, 33% came from mail registration, more than 6% from public assistance offices, 4% from other offices designated by the

respective states, and 27% from all other sources. In Kansas, 49% of registrations came from motor vehicle offices, nearly 15% from mail registration, just over 2% from public assistance offices, 3% from offices designated by the state, and 31% from all other sources. The FEC reported that the national rate of duplicate registrations was 5.2%.

While the NVRA apparently has increased voter registration rolls, it has so far not led to an increase in voter participation. Turnout in the November 1996 general election actually fell by 5% from the 1992 election. Nationwide turnout was also lower in Kansas than in the record-setting election of 1992, although it remained above the national average.

Although it is hard to quantify, the FEC believes registration lists

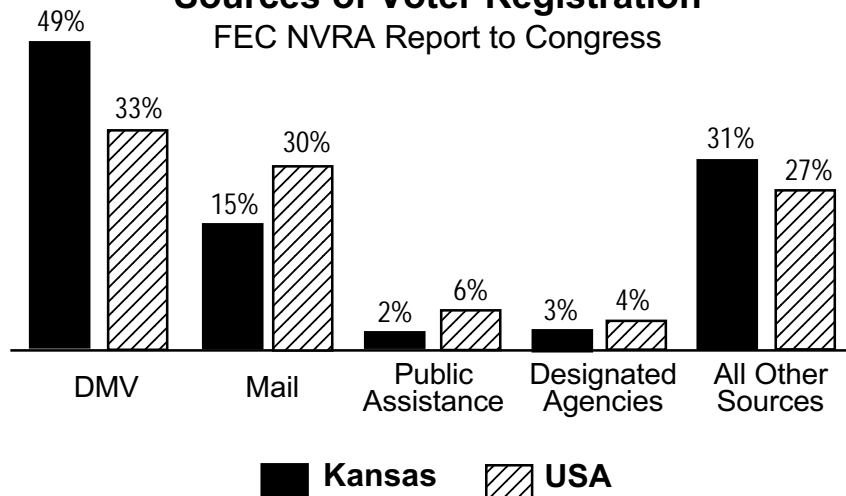
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### Sources of Voter Registration FEC NVRA Report to Congress



# Election precincts frozen

## Legislature to redistrict in 2002

### *The freeze is on.*

KSA 25-26a03 states "... no election precinct shall be created, divided, abolished or consolidated or the boundaries thereof changed during the period... between January 1 of a year the last digit of which is 7 and the time when the legislature has been redistricted in a year the last digit of which is 2..." In English, that means from January 1, 1997 until after the legislature redistricts in 2002.

The exceptions to the freeze are: (1) creation of a new political subdivision; (2) alteration of a political subdivision by annexation, when new precincts may be created; (3) the annexed area may be included in a precinct immediately adjacent to it, if the area is in the same legislative district; (4) establishing new precincts lying entirely within the boundaries of any existing precinct; (5) when required to conform to federal census bureau block boundaries.

### *What does this mean to you, the county election officer?*

1. Election precincts may not be changed until after the legislature redistricts in 2002.

2. Annexations are very important to you and here's why. Annexed areas are handled in one of three ways:

(a) If the annexed area is contiguous (next to and touching) to an existing precinct AND the annexed area is in the SAME legislative district, then you can add the annexed area to the existing precinct.

(b) If the annexed area is contiguous to an existing precinct BUT the annexed area is NOT in the SAME legislative district, then you must create a new precinct consisting of the newly annexed area.

(c) If the annexed area is NOT contiguous to an existing precinct, you must create a new precinct consisting of the newly annexed area.

If you have questions about precincts or annexations, call Randy Foster at (785) 296-3488.

## *Canvassing Kansas*

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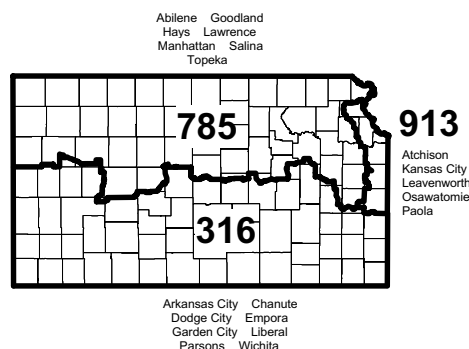
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## Permissive dialing extended until September 1998

New area code 785 became operational July 20, 1997 for much of the northern half of Kansas which used to be in the 913 area. Topeka is included in the area code change, so the Secretary of State's office is using up its available stock of stationery, forms, business cards and anything else printed with the phone number. Plans are being made for reprinting. The county election officer directory also has been revised accordingly.

The new system also initiated a permissive dialing period which has been extended until September 30, 1998. During this time a consumer may dial either 913 or 785 and the call will be completed. This extended period of time will allow all of us to adjust to the new area code.

### Kansas Area Code Map





RON THORNBURGH  
SECRETARY OF STATE

Dear Friends,

The Midwest Election Officials Conference is fast approaching!

We hope you are planning to join us in Kansas City, December 7th through the 10th. The state election offices in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska have worked hard to prepare a conference that will not only be informative, but provide you with an opportunity to meet new people, hear interesting and well-known speakers and enjoy the Kansas City area.

While the agenda is not yet final, we will have a diverse program with professionals familiar with many aspects of the election process. We are pleased to have confirmations of attendance from the following presenters:

- ✓ Penelope Bonsall, Federal Election Commission
- ✓ Craig DonSanto, U.S. Department of Justice
- ✓ Doug Lewis, Election Center
- ✓ Dick Smolka, *Election Administration Reports*

In addition to the breakout seminars featuring these prominent election experts, vendors will have displays and we have invited several nationally recognized public officials as keynote speakers. This is a conference you won't want to miss.

Information packets will be sent to election officials in the four-state area this month. Please respond quickly as space is limited. We hope to see Kansas well represented in Kansas City.

Sincerely,

Secretary of State

# County clerk observes elections in Albania

National, state and local election officials in the United States are finding ever-increasing opportunities to visit foreign countries as election observers.

Lyon County Clerk Karen Hartenbower visited Albania this year as part of a program sponsored and funded by the International Foundation of Electoral Systems. Hartenbower was attending the International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers' national conference in Philadelphia, PA, when they asked for volunteers.

One hundred volunteers observed the June 29 regular election in Albania. Hartenbower was one of 36 who spent July 2 through July 9 observing the July 6 runoff election. The runoff was held to decide among candidates who had not received at least 50% of the votes cast in the regular election.

During her visit, Hartenbower said she felt safe because the volunteers had military guards at all times;

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***Even in this strife-torn setting...election officials were disappointed in their 70 percent turnout.***

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although they saw much violence resulting from political strife. Three million residents own more than one million automatic weapons.

That, mixed with the political uncertainties, resulted in gunfire day and night. Even in this strife-torn setting where people in some areas felt it too dangerous to go to the polls until the armed guards arrived, Albanian election officials were disappointed in their 70% turnout.

Hartenbower observed a number of contrasts that should interest election officials in Kansas: election board workers work for free and receive training from their parties; they are free to leave the polling place and even to drink alcohol on the job. In some places workers voted in place of people who did not show up.

Workers contend with handwritten registration lists, voters who give their unmarked ballots to their spouses to be voted, unlit voting booths, and voting under military guard. Voters are required to present picture identification, sign their names, then have their left thumbnails sprayed with invisible ink. Thumbs are checked under a black light before anyone may vote to prevent multiple voting.

Hartenbower emphasizes that although there was evidence of fraud and other questionable voting practices in certain areas, overall the election was free

and fair. The hospitality of the people was great, although at times the food and water left something to be desired.

She said the experience was not a vacation, and could not be called "fun." "This is a country fighting for democracy. I felt very privileged to be a part of this mission, and I would go again in a minute. This was truly an experience of a lifetime."

Kentucky state election director George Russell spent six weeks in Albania; Washington state election director Gary McIntosh spent two months in Bosnia; and the Federal Election Commission's Brian Hancock spent ten days in Mongolia. Each observer tells different stories comparing cultures and life-styles, contrasting democratic styles, even relating instances when they felt endangered by the violence endemic in places like Albania and Bosnia as they struggle to restructure their governments.

There are a number of organizations promoting these opportunities, including the International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers (IACREOT); the International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES); the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); the Office of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); and Stockholm, Sweden-based IDEA. Information is available from the Federal Election Commission Clearinghouse, certain Democratic and Republican groups, and Dick Smolka, who is editor of a national newsletter entitled *Election Administration Reports*.

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## Military has higher voter participation than public

According to the Federal Voting Assistance Program's 1996 post-election survey, the 64% military voting rate is 15% above the public's participation rate. At a time when the public participation rate declined to 49% from 55% in 1992, aggressive voting assistance programs conducted by all commands as well as state and local governments contributed to this high military participation rate.

Also noted in the survey was the impact of absentee voting. Several key elections were highlighted in the survey, including the Kansas 8th District State Board of Education race, which was decided by only 236 votes.

## Thornburghs announce birth of son

At 2:54 a.m. on May 29, 1997, Ron and Annette Thornburgh celebrated the birth of their son, Greyson Oscar Thornburgh, weighing 8lbs 3oz and 21 1/2". Baby and mother were fine.

As for Ron, "I have never been more tired and confused in my life, but I wouldn't trade being Grey's Dad for anything in the world."

Greyson is the Thornburghs' first child.

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## Election workers now exempt from some federal taxes

This month President Clinton signed a bill which exempts service performed by election workers from federal unemployment tax if their earnings for election-related services are less than \$1,000 per calendar year. The bill passed by Congress was HR 2015, now called Public Law 105-33. It is effective on earnings after August 5, 1997. States and local governments are not liable for unemployment compensation for claims based on election work.

In the past few years, federal laws have been passed to exempt election board workers' pay from Social Security withholdings and workers compensation, also effective up to \$1,000 in earnings per year. The state Division of Accounts and Reports has distributed information in the past to county election officers specifying what paperwork needs to be completed to implement these policies in the respective counties.

## *What is a voting system?*

A voting system is a combination of mechanical, electromechanical or electronic equipment that is used to cast and count ballots. There are three types of voting systems (other than paper ballots) currently certified for use in the state of Kansas. They are:

### ✓ **Mechanical**

These are machines where voters turn levers and the votes are tabulated mechanically on counters. No Kansas county currently uses mechanical voting machines.

### ✓ **Marksense**

A marksense voting system is one that records votes, and produces a tabulation of the vote count using ballots printed with text (candidates or issues) and counts (or "senses") votes cast upon specified voting response locations (typically ovals). The two types of marksense systems are *precinct count systems* that tabulate ballots at the polling place and *central count systems* that tabulate ballots at a central counting site. Marksense systems are often referred to as optical scanning systems.

### ✓ **DRE**

A **D**irect **R**ecording **E**lectronic voting system records votes using a ballot display rather than an actual paper ballot. A voter actuates a mechanical or electro-optical device, the data is processed by a computer program and the votes or ballot images are stored in an internal memory. The votes are tabulated as hard copy or stored in a removable memory device.

Every voting machine that is used in Kansas must first be certified by the Office of the Secretary of State. Increasingly our office has come to rely on the work of Independent Testing Authorities or ITAs. ITAs are staffed by recognized experts in the field of testing and evaluation. Typically, a vendor will submit a new system to the ITA where the system is subjected to comprehensive testing that meets Federal Election Commission standards. After receiving FEC certification, a certification hearing is held in Topeka to ensure that the voting system also meets Kansas standards.

In June, the Secretary of State's office conducted certification testing of a marksense precinct level voting machine for American Information Systems, Inc. of Omaha, Nebraska. The Model 100 Precinct Level Ballot Tabulation System was certified for use in Kansas.

This month the I-Mark Electronic Ballot Station, Model EBS100, also was certified for use in Kansas. The I-Mark Ballot Station is a new DRE voting system that uses a kiosk as a voting station and the voter uses an electronic light pen to vote.

# Duplicate registration detection successful

As reported in the June 1997 issue of this newsletter, the Secretary of State's office has created a new computer program to check the statewide central voter

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***It is estimated that the program will result in the detection of more than 10,000 duplicate records.***

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registration database for duplicate records. The increased number of registered voters due to NVRA has created an increase in duplicate registrations.

Computer printouts of apparent

duplicates were sent to each county election officer, whose duty it was to verify whether apparent duplicate records did in fact represent the same individual. In many cases this resulted in the deletion of duplicate records; some individuals appeared in the duplicate file three or four times.

The program is nearly complete, and responses have been received from more than half the county election officers who received the data. According to responses received, the duplicate search was a success.

Thousands of possible duplicate records were discovered and sent to county election officers across the

state, resulting in the deletion of approximately 5,800 records in the first 56 counties to respond. It is estimated that the program will result in the deletion of more than 10,000 duplicate records.

The Secretary of State's office has received a positive response from county election officers, as well as several suggestions for improving the program. At present, plans are to conduct it annually, and in the future it might be possible for counties to access the statewide voter file and check their own records against it to determine duplicates. The Secretary of State's office plans to look into the possibility of obtaining statewide lists of felony convictions and deceased persons to conduct similar checks in an attempt to keep the voter registration lists as clean as possible.

## Recent personnel changes in the Secretary of State's office

Several personnel changes have occurred in the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's office during the first half of 1997.

Jim Gardner, elections secretary, and Kevin Gregg, elections research clerk, left our office in February to accept positions with 2nd District Congressman Jim Ryun's office. At that time Jan Sachs transferred from the legislative account position to elections secretary.

Raylene Wallace transferred from the Secretary of State's corporation division to replace Jan Sachs in the legislative account position on March 9. Raylene and her husband Larry have two children: Kayley, 3 1/2, and Ashleigh, 11 weeks.

On March 14 Kevin Gaskin was hired to fill the position of elections research clerk to replace Kevin Gregg. Kevin Gaskin moved to Topeka from Texas one year ago. He will continue the collegiate studies he began in Texas by attending Washburn University part time this fall, majoring in political science.

The legislative account position handles the sale and distribution of lawbooks and supplements, administrative regulations books, session laws, constitutions and state flags. The elections secretary manages the state's file of campaign finance reports, candidate filings, and enrolled bills passed by the legislature. The elections research clerk files and maintains copies of the statements of substantial interest, handles lobbyist registrations and reports, and assists in research for legislation.

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## Johnson County Election Commissioner's office wins award

Johnson County Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt's office was honored at last month's National Association of Counties annual conference in Baltimore, Maryland. The office received a 1997 NACO Achievement Award for its civic education and public information program.

The election office's program was called "Promoting Voting," and it included (1) establishing corporate partnerships, (2) a model student election outreach program, (3) a home page on the Internet, and (4) establishing a community public relations and marketing campaign. The awards are intended to recognize excellence in programs that promote responsive, effective county government.

# Bryant and Knapp attend national conferences

The National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) and National Association of State Election Directors (NASED) held joint annual conferences in Mobile, Alabama July 25-31. Chuck Knapp, communications director for Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh, attended the NASS conference, and Brad Bryant, state election director, attended the NASED conference and part of NASS. Thornburgh, who usually attends NASS meetings, was unable to be present.

The NASED meeting offered opportunities to discuss election issues with other states, realizing the many similarities and several differences in the states' experiences. The Department of Justice sent a representative to discuss the status of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) and current litigation involving congressional redistricting and voting rights. The Federal Election Commission summarized current projects including its recent report to Congress on the NVRA (see article on page one). NASED's coordination of efforts to promote international election observation by federal, state and local American election officials was discussed. There was a review of pending federal legislation and the program initiated by NASED to standardize the testing of voting equipment through the use of recognized, certified independent testing authorities.

Other NASED discussions centered around the Federal Voting Assistance Program's initiative to develop voting by the Internet and various ways the states are finding to use and improve their central voter registration databases.

Among the many topics discussed at NASS were election technology including computers, the Internet and optical imaging; possible improvements to the presidential nomination system; the process of making rules and regulations; and current litigation and legislation.

*Visit the Secretary of State's office on the*

*World Wide Web*

<http://www.ink.org/public/sos>

## Thornburgh to chair NASS elections committee

Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh was appointed last month to serve as chairman of the Committee on Elections and Voter Participation for the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS).

In a press release August 5, NASS president Olene Walker of Utah said, "Secretary Thornburgh's vast knowledge of elections and his outstanding leadership will benefit states throughout the nation. I am pleased he has agreed to accept this important position."

Thornburgh, who was elected Kansas Secretary of State in 1994, served as chief of the election division in Secretary of State Bill Graves' office from 1987 to 1991. He was a founding member of the National Association of State Election Directors in 1989.

## Packet with MEOC information to be sent in September

Hotel rooms. Menus. Speakers. Meeting rooms. Entertainment. Transportation. The list of things to be taken care of is long, as anyone who has organized a big conference can attest. But details are being worked out for the 1997 Midwest Election Officials Conference through a cooperative arrangement between the election offices in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska.

A tentative meeting schedule has been devised, keynote speakers have been invited and topics for seminar discussions have been decided upon. The menus for lunches, dinners and breaks are being finalized. After-hours entertainment is being organized.

In September, county election officers in the four-state area will receive a packet of information detailing the schedule and costs of the MEOC. We encourage each county election officer to act quickly upon receiving the packet to reserve a place at the conference, which will be December 8 through 10.

If you have questions, call the Secretary of State's office and we'll bring you up to date on the plans.

Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh has appointed Marilyn Chapman to another four-year term as Sedgwick County election commissioner. A ceremony was held July 18 at Chapman's office in the Historic Courthouse in Wichita. Thornburgh administered the oath before dozens of Chapman's friends and co-workers.

Chapman thanked her staff for their loyalty and hard work, saying "This is a job I could not do without them. They're the ones who really do the work." She added, "I am honored to have earned the continued confidence of Secretary Thornburgh, and I am privileged to have served Sedgwick County with three different Secretaries of State: Ron Thornburgh, Bill Graves and Jack Brier."

Thornburgh said, "Because I respect her judgment and value her opinion, I'm proud to reappoint Marilyn to another term as Sedgwick County election commissioner. Marilyn has been, and will continue to be, a leader among election officials in Kansas and throughout the nation."

Chapman's new term extends until July 19, 2001. She was first appointed Sedgwick County election commissioner by Secretary of State Brier in 1981.

## Reminders